

DRAFT MINUTES

**Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board
Subcommittee on the Future of Districts**

Monday, July 14, 2003

Virginia Department of Forestry, Charlottesville, VA

Subcommittee Members Present

Granville Maitland, Chair, VSWCB
Keith Burgess, Monacan SWCD
M. Denise Doetzer, NRCS
Peter Holden, Loudoun SWCD
Daphne Jamison, Blue Ridge SWCD
Don Wells, Hanover-Caroline SWCD

Bill Browning, DCR
Jim Byrne, Culpeper SWCD
Jacki Easter, FSA
Mark Meador, DCR

Subcommittee Members Not Present

Linda Campbell, Vice Chair, VSWCB
Charles Horn, Headwaters SWCD
Bob Tudor, John Marshall SWCD

Hudson Reese, Halifax SWCD

Others Present

Jim Boland, Loudoun SWCD
Stephanie Martin, VASWCD

Michael R. Fletcher, DCR
Ricky Rash, Piedmont SWCD

Call to order, opening comments

Mr. Maitland welcomed attendees. He noted that the purpose of this meeting was to prepare a preliminary report on Phase One of the Subcommittee's work for the July 17, 2003 Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board Meeting and to prepare a formal presentation for the September meeting.

Review & resolve minutes from the June 26th, 2003 subcommittee meeting

Mr. Meador noted that draft minutes are posted on the Town Hall Website:
<http://townhall.state.va.us>.

Mr. Wells moved that minutes be approved as submitted. Mr. Byrne seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

“Phase One” discussion and closure on the draft policy for funding newly established and/or realigned SWCDs (handout)

The draft policy as prepared by DCR staff is attached as Attachment A

Comments regarding the draft policy:

- There should not be a restriction for new counties not currently part of a district to become involved (i.e. join a district).
- Districts should not reorganize only for the purpose of financial support.
- The question was raised “Does a district have a choice if a neighboring locality, not currently in a district asks to join that district?” The District has the right to address concerns at the public hearing.
- The Board financial policy should be reviewed.
- Consensus was that this policy should stand separate from the Board financial policy.

Mr. Byrne moved that the draft policy be submitted to the Office of the Attorney General for review and that, based upon a favorable review this policy be presented to the Board for consideration of approval at the September meeting.

Mr. Wells seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Other topics for discussion

Once the above policy has been adopted, the committee should look at the overall structure of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Districts should be organized to have the most impact. 47 Districts is not a “magic number” that cannot be changed.

How USDA Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service offices are set up should be taken into consideration.

Next Meeting

Friday, September 26, 1:00 p.m.
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Richmond, VA

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Attachment A

Adopted (date)

DRAFT July 10, 2003

Virginia Soil & Water Conservation Board (Board) Policy

Title: Financial Commitments For Establishment of a New Soil & Water Conservation District (district), or Realignment of an Existing District

Purpose:

To preserve the current level of operational funding made available to SWCDs by the Commonwealth so that the creation of a new district or realignment of an existing district does not adversely impact the financial resources of existing districts.

To achieve this purpose:

- The Board hereby establishes a position of supporting inclusion of every county and/or city of the Commonwealth in an SWCD (solely, or in partnership with one or more localities). The Board also recognizes that creation or realignment of districts can adversely impact the financial resources the Board administers for the existing, established SWCDs.
- Given authority established by § 10.1-512. and § 10.1-514. of the Code of Virginia, the Board will require commitments of financial support from the locality(ies) of the newly created or realigned SWCD in situations where the creation of a new district, or realignment of an existing district will result in a reduction of funding to all other districts.
- This commitment may be required as a condition of approval for establishment of a new district or realignment of an existing district.
- The affected localities must commit resources (cash and/or in kind assistance) in amounts no less than the essential funding level (see Virginia Soil & Water Conservation Board (Board) Policy Title: Financial Assistance for Soil & Water Conservation Districts (districts)) in order to provide for the technical and administrative needs for the district and its board of directors.
- Generally this commitment must continue annually until an equal increase is established within state funds administered by the Board to support SWCD operational expenses, or until otherwise notified by the Board in writing.